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THE BARNABITES



**Manual of history and spirituality
of the Order of Clerics Regular
of St. Paul Beheaded**

Chapter 21

20th century expansion

Are we an Italian Congregation? If we take into account the number of houses (or, rather, of the residences), we find that thirty are in Italy, and about forty in other countries, including the missionary stations (June 2012). The statistics also tell us that the number of non-European members equal to that of the inhabitants of the Old World.

The need to expand beyond the circle of the Alps presented itself very soon to our Fathers. In fact, in 1570 a highly favorable foundation project in Portugal seemed to take shape. The Fathers gathered in the Chapter, despite great pressure, declined the most favorable offer. This act, suggested by an extreme prudence and certainly due to the wing that today we would define as “conservative” – through the experienced of the difficulties encounter for far-distant foundations together with the request for several local foundations - has received negative judgments by our historians!

But not long in coming were good opportunities for a transplant to other lands. St. Francis de Sales, in the early 1600s, took the Congregation in Annecy, a French outpost of the foundations.

It was then the turn of Germany or rather Austria, in 1626 and, finally, of Belgium, where the French Fathers took refuge, creating new works, following the persecutions which devastated France in the late 1800. Despite the precarious condition of the missionary effort made at the dawn of the twentieth century in the Amazon, various foundations have taken place in Brazil.

It was, however, only in ‘900, especially in the second half, that the expansion beyond the borders of Italy took on new dimensions and more extensive, and that the Barnabites, freed from a certain narrowness of horizons and a connatural timidity, and eager to make the Pauline “greek with the Greek and barbarian with the barbarians”, decided to implement their Founder program to the letter, who sent them “to proclaim the spiritual liveliness and spirit alive everywhere” (Letter V). Let us now review those foundations.

A. BELGIUM

The establishment of the Barnabites in Belgium is partially due to persecutions. At the beginning of the 20th century, when the Combs government suppressed all Religious Congregations and expelled all Religious from France, the Barnabites settled in Brazil and in Belgium.

The first two Barnabites arrived in Brussels in 1896. At first they rented a little house in “Avenue Brugmann.” Today, the crossing closer to our present house is still called “Ma. Campagne” (my countryside), since that was a favorite spot for Sunday walks. After 100 years the countryside had to succumb to the avalanche of new homes as the city expanded.

The cornerstone of the church was laid on April 25, 1905. The consecration took place on October 18, 1906, only a year and half later. The apostolic activities of the Barnabite community were centered on three things: the church, the “Ouvre de l’Enfant Jesus,” and the “Eau Vive.” Most importantly the Belgian Fathers opened and developed the mission in Congo.

These activities have flourished until the end of the 1900's. Unfortunately at present the total absence of new vocations has reduced the Province to only few members and activities like the church in Brussels, with the "Ouvre de l'Enfant Jesus," while running some parishes.

The "Ouvre de l'Enfant Jesus"

This activity was started very modestly in 1891 before the arrival of the Barnabites. The slogan of the foundress, Gabrielle Fontaine, was: "To bring to all the knowledge and the love of the Infant Jesus." She was the one to invite the Barnabites to take over the leadership, which they did in 1896.

From 1895 to the present the magazine "Ouvre de l'Enfant Jesus" has been spreading the message of the Good News not only in Belgium and France, but also in Switzerland, England, Canada, Antilles Islands, Ivory Coast, Togo, etc. Many are the daily letters asking for guidance and support in life's struggles. It is difficult to number the number of pilgrims coming to the Shrine, since there are only very few organized pilgrimages, but many are those coming on their own especially on the 25th of every month.

B. BRAZIL

In 1983, during the celebration of the 450th anniversary of the approval of our Order (February 18, 1533), and the 80th anniversary of the Barnabite presence in Brazil (1903), Monsignor Maurilio Cesar da Lima, in his official speech said:

"...Among the regions of the four continents where the Barnabites work, Brazil is the country where the sons of St. Anthony M. Zaccaria are most involved.

"The first Barnabites reached Brazil in 1903 from France in two groups landing at the same time, one in Recife and the other in Belém do Pará. Those of Pernambuco (Recife) penetrated deep into the 'Sertao,' always as missionaries; a year later the two groups came together in Belém to organize themselves. They started to take on different ministries, preaching and confessing in the Basilica of Nazaré in Belém, and in its huge parish at the mouth of the Amazon river, in the seminary, and in other parishes, until the parish of Our Lady of Nazaré was entrusted to their care. It was already a center of Marian devotion: the Barnabites increased its vitality and gradually transformed the primitive church into the present Basilica, and artistic pride of Pará and of all Brazil." (*see p. 197*).

On July 26, 1928, the Holy Father, Pius XI, the Pope of the missions, encouraged the Barnabite missionaries who had just accepted a new mission, the Prelacy of Gurupi-Guamá, (Pará), with these heartfelt words: "Our attention is directed to Brazil, because our numbers there are not equal to the immensity of the region and its population; this is why for you who have chosen this mission we reserve our blessing: not special, but privileged blessings. This country concerns us deeply, but we are perfectly at peace, because the mission is entrusted to you and it is in good hands."

The See of the Prelacy was at first established in Ourém, but in 1934 it was transferred to Bracança, changing its name to "Prelacy of Guamá." Many were the accomplishments of the Fathers in the various missionary centers they created, but nothing could compare to the adventurous expeditions called "Desobrigas" to reach out at least once a year on foot, by canoe, on horse, or today with a jeep, the most remote chapels in the heart of the rain-forest or along the treacherous shores of the Atlantic Ocean.

In 1937 Fr. Eliseo Coroli became the new Prelate. He was consecrated a Bishop in 1940, and for forty years he led with dynamism and determination the development of the Prelacy. Following are some of his accomplishments:

- Bragança became the center of all activities: the school of Sta. Teresina for the education of the young and the preparation of Christian teachers; the hospital with the maternity ward; the “Radio Educadora” with more than 1000 receiving stations, to educate young and adults in all fields of learning; the cathedral church of Our Lady of the Rosary, and two other parish churches; the residence of the missionaries, which now is the center of the newly established Diocese.

- Meanwhile, various chapels became well organized centers in crucial areas along the rivers at first, and then along the Transamazonian highway: San Miguel do Guamá, San Domingo do Capim, Vizeu, Irituia, San Francisco, Paráominas, Villa Rondon, Santa Luzia, Capita Poço, etc.

- Together with parishes the missionaries added schools to keep up with the new generations.

- The one project close to the heart of the late Bishop Coroli was his Institute of Sisters, “The missionary Sisters of Santa Teresina.” They are the indispensable workers in all fields: hospitals, schools, parishes, social centers, radio. A great innovation in their Religious Life was the introduction of the fourth vow, “The Apostolate of Joy.”

Bishop Coroli’s right hand, Fr. Miguel Giambelli, was the new Bishop. Together with his confreres he had to deal with very distressing problems in the promotion of human dignity: agriculture, handicrafts, social assistance, defense of the “Caboclos” (poor farmers, often victims of new landlords who force them out of their land). Great emphasis is given to the education of good Christian leaders, especially for the “Base Communities.”

Msgr. Maurilio continues:

“The Barnabites reached Rio de Janeiro in 1909: right away they founded a school dedicated to St. Anthony M. Zaccaria. The present one stands on the same spot of the original, though now with eight floors, and at one time with 3000 students.

“Close to the Zaccaria school in Catete, the Barnabites, in 1930, built a shrine dedicated to Our Lady Mother of Divine Providence, the Marian title so beloved by the Barnabites and which has been spread everywhere the Congregation has gone.”

To solve the serious problem of local vocations, the young aspirants, at first were housed in Rio, then in 1918 they were transferred to Jacarepaga. Three years later the Cardinal Archbishop entrusted, the parish dedicated to Our Lady of Loreto that stretched for dozens of kilometers at first, then in 1945 it was divided in two creating another parish in Tanque dedicated to St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria, also entrusted to the care of our Fathers.

Invited by the Cardinal Archbishop in 1933, the Barnabites settled in Copacabana - which at the time was not yet the very elegant and gigantic area of our days - erecting the parish of St. Paul, and one year later the “Guy de Fontgalland” school was opened.

From Rio to São Paulo: on July 14, 1935, at the invitation of the bishop of this city, the Barnabites took possession of the parish of St. Raphael. It was located in the district of Mooca, inhabited mainly by Italian workers. The church did not exist, but thanks to the tireless work of our Fathers, now St. Raphael, in its beautiful modern Gothic style, offers the workers of Mooca a center of an intense religiosity and social care.

The seminary, always at the center of the Fathers concerns, found another place in 1945 when in Caxambu in the state of Minas Gerais, the school was entrusted to the Congregation. Retired from Caxambu in 1965, the year after and at great sacrifice, the

Barnabites moved the seminary to Caseiros, in Rio Grande do Sul, where they were also officiating the parish. In 1987 the complex was handed over to the diocese.

We thus come to talk about the foundation in Belo Horizonte. The Barnabites began to work in this city of Minas Gerais in 1947, in a parish entrusted to them for only three years, because in 1950 they had the opportunity to take over the "Father Machado" school. This is a secular foundation, but, since it was entrusted to the Barnabites, it has been integrated in the living body of the Congregation in all respects. In addition, it has become also the formation center of the Province. In the last decade (2000-2010), after several years of crisis, the institute has taken new developments, giving life also to a University faculty. For a full pastoral ministry, in 1986, the Barnabites have accepted also the administration of the "Christ Crucificado" parish.

Always in terms of a pioneer schools, at least in our congregation, we have to report the *Centro Juvenil São Carlos* in Miguel Pereira, in the state of Rio de Janeiro, founded in 1959. This foundation purpose is to provide for the preparation and professional development of school children of the "favelas" of Copacabana.

Worthy of mention is also the initiative, still in Belo Horizonte, by the tireless Fr. Mario Pozzoli. Since 1988 he has created, with the support of many benefactors, the so-called "Project Providence", to meet the needs of education and job placement of the youth of the "favelas", which now serves more than 3000 children. For this reason Father was declared an honorary citizen of the city (1997). In 2013, on the occasion of the 25th of its foundation, the Institute has been transferred to the local diocese.

Meanwhile in Brazil the Barnabite presence had recorded major structural changes. In 1910 the Foundation in the Land of the Holy Cross became a Pro-Province and a Province in 1931. The 1964 General Chapter decreed that the house in Belém, with the Basilica of Nazaré, and combined with the missionary residences in the Guamá Prelacy, be constituted as a Pro-Province of the North, whose pro-provincial was the same superior of the mission (Decree 19). In 1971 it became a full Province.

When the Prelacy became the diocese of Bragança in 1980, only some houses of the new diocese remained as part of the Barnabite Province, while new foundations were made in the Diocese of Belem: a parish in Vigia (1992-2009) and the formation house in Benevides (1994). In 1996 in Samambaia, at the outskirts of the capital Brasília (1996), the St. Anthony M. Zaccaria parish was opened, and in 2006 the interprovincial novitiate house to serve the Latin American Provinces. In 2005 another expansion took place with the opening of the Mother of Divine Providence parish in Fortaleza, Ceará.

Let's conclude with the words of Msgr. Maurilio again:

"The list of manifold Barnabite activities would be incomplete if we left out the presence and the activities of their Sisters (founded by the same Founder), the Angelic Sisters of St. Paul. They reached Brazil in 1922 and dedicated themselves to the education of the girls through schools in Ipanema (Rio de Janeiro), Teresopolis, Belo Horizonte, Belém do Pará, Caseiros, and lately Brasília...

"May the Lord enlarge even more this Congregation of the Barnabite Fathers... at the service of the Kingdom that the children of St. Anthony M. Zaccaria are building among the people of God, until its final fulfillment in eternity."

C. AFRICA

The Barnabite first experience in Africa goes back to 1935 in Alexandria, Egypt, with a school for Italians. But that was only a very brief prelude. The definitive establishment of the Congregation in Africa came in 1940's with the Belgian confreres.

1. DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

The Barnabites have been in the very heart of the African continent for the past seventy years, on the shore of the lake Kivu.

Until 1960 Zaire was a Belgian colony, called Belgian Congo, and after the death of Mobutu, it has been called "The Democratic Republic of Congo".

In December 1949, Fr. Victor Dessart, after 25 years in Brazil and a trip through the interior of Africa, arrived in Rome to present to the General Council a daring project: to open a school for local children in Costermanville (the present Bukavu), invited by the Apostolic Vicar, Bishop Cleire. "The project has been approved; the French-Belgian Province has enthusiastically accepted... the new mission in the Belgian Congo, entitled to St. Paul the Apostle" (Eco). A year later, 1950, with Fr. Rose and Fr. Leterme, Fr. Dessart landed in Murhesa to teach in the school of the White Fathers.

On June 14, 1950, Fr. Leterme wrote: "I have been asked to go: I always had wanted to be a missionary, although not necessarily as a teacher. But since I have been here I am convinced more than ever that school is indeed the apostolate most needed at the moment."

He right away looked for a building suited to the professional standards of the Barnabite scholastic tradition. The project was started in Mugeru with a simple hut, followed by a simple one floor construction in Bukavu, and finally the new modern St. Paul's college.

The ground breaking ceremony took place in 1954, and the official inauguration on October 13, 1957, at the presence of the Apostolic Vicar Archbishop Louis Van Steene and the Superior General Fr. Emile Schot. The school was visited also by Leopold III, King of Belgium (March 21, 1957) and Queen Elizabeth.

In February 1958 the site was visited by the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Alfredo Bruinera, who brought the greetings and encouragement of the Pope Pious XII, together with his thanks to the students for the 170 letters of affection and devotion they had sent him.

A year later the Holy See sent a special Apostolic Blessing so very necessary, as the revolution for independence was beginning. On June 30, 1960, the nation acquired independence. The missionaries were caught in the middle of the fight. The school "St. Paul the Apostle" was used as a refuge for the rebels, and more than once the very lives of the students and of the Fathers were in jeopardy. In February 1963 the Secretary of Education paid a visit to the school, encouraging the efforts at educating and forming the men of tomorrow.

The same year some Angelic Sisters arrived to work side by side with the Barnabites. With them came first aid centers, medicines, food, and hygiene courses for mothers, sewing for girls, religious instruction, and more.

But more tribulations were on the horizon. In August of 1964 the Mulelists attacked Bukavu and again our school was a primary target. UN soldiers took over in the attempt to keep peace. The situation remained shaky for three years. The Fathers went back to teaching the best as they could, at least for the students able to walk to school. Slowly the new native government asserted itself, bringing some order and peace. Some alumni returned as teachers,

which helped a lot in the Africanization process of the school. For a year the institute remained nationalized, until President Mobutu restored it to the Diocese. The new Bishop, a native, asked the Barnabites to remain in the school, especially as spiritual animators, while more natives were put in charge. This allowed the Fathers more time to dedicate to the Christian Community and to organize also a parish dedicated to our patron saint St. Paul.

More missionaries arrived from the Lombard Province, Italy, which had assumed full responsibility from the Belgian confreres. Not only did new missionaries arrive but with them new assistance through the many missionary clubs flourishing in many Italian Barnabite communities. This allowed to open another parish in Birava, on a beautiful peninsula along the shore of lake Kivu. Here the Fathers arrived in 1968, while the parish was inaugurated in 1970, dedicated to Our Lady Mother of Divine Providence. What once was a wild country, under the leadership of men like Fr. Lino Castagna, Brother Jerome Andena, and the late Fr. Angelo Erba, has become a parochial center bursting with all kind of activities and programs. Groups of volunteers have organized trips to the mission to build the main church and chapels in the countryside, schools, first aid centers, carpentry, a mill, etc., besides the education programs in sanitation and farm management, to create tomorrow's native leaders.

For years Mobero will be the Formation center while the professed Students will be sent to Rome for theology, until the new theologate will be opened in Kinshasa (2004).

In 2003 the direction and administration of the St. Paul college will return in the hands of the Barnabites bringing it to new splendor, in spite of the damage caused by the 2008 earthquake.

2. RWANDA

For years the Barnabites had contemplated the possibility of a mission post in Rwanda, at the center of Africa, bordering with Zaire, and separated only by the long and narrow lake Kivu.

When a new mission has to be open, many things need to be considered and pondered upon. If, how, what will happen, the personnel, the new language "Kinyarwanda," which apostolate, school or parish, and finally the call is so strong that the missionaries go, although the choices are not clear yet, they will see on the spot. Perhaps, it is not this the best way to be committed? First to see and then to decide.

Thus, at the beginning of 1977, Fr. John Sala and Fr. Aldo Rizzi landed at the airport of Kigali, the capital of the small Republic of Rwanda. They chose as a reference point the school of the Marist Brothers, in the Province of Ruhengeri, North of the country. Their presence had been officially approved, but they had to travel across the country to look and decide what kind of presence the Barnabites could give to the church of Rwanda. Accompanied by his excellency Phocas Nikwigize, Bishop of Ruhengeri, our two missionaries travelled all the roads of Rwanda to end up again in the diocese of Ruhengeri. There was a mission ready for them in Muhura, a little town located just one degree below the Equator but at an altitude of almost 2000 meters. An Italian missionary of the White Fathers of Africa, was bringing to completion the church and the rectory, but had no missionaries to staff it. It was like a dream come true on both sides. It was a great joy for the Bishop, the people, and our Congregation. The community was enriched immensely with the arrival of the Sisters "Oblates of the Holy Spirit," from Lucca, Italy, who had been in Rwanda, in another mission, for ten years already.

In 1978 the FOYER (social center) was built, a kind of domestic school, run by the Sisters, for the country girls. That was the beginning of a series of activities aiming at

providing the local community with all the necessary structure for a better future: medical center, nutrition center, maternity, dispensary, etc.

Meantime the deepest concern of the missionaries was the fact that the people lacked a serious Christian formation. Good lay leaders needed to be prepared to create small groups, which, tomorrow, immersed in the large mass, will work as evangelical yeast to ferment the whole mass: catechists, community bases leaders, grammar school teachers, animators of Catholic Action, etc.

The apostolate of the laity is irreplaceable in the life of the Church, but just essential is the clergy and especially native. This is why the Barnabites have erected a formation house in Cyangugu, Rwanda, on the shore of Lake Kivu.

D. CHILE

The pioneer of the foundation in Chile was Fr. Pete Bianchi who approached Bishop Cifuentes of La Serena, and in October 1947 sent a letter to Fr. General Idelfonso Clerici full of enthusiasm. His appeal found generous responses among the confreres: Fr. Richard Frigerio and Fr. Zaccaria Penati arrived in January 1948, Fr. Fagetti and Fr. Langè in February. To encourage them Fr. General himself went to La Serena and on his way back to Rome he wrote in the ECO of May-June 1948: "It is so sweet to dream when one wakes up to face accomplished realities rich with future promises."

In La Serena our Fathers found a school with 80 boarding students and 200 pupils, which in five years will double, to become 1200 today. Meantime other Confreres arrived from Italy: Frs. Picetti, Fornabaio, Bro. Martin, Frs. Baderna, Visigalli, Sala, Fior, Panigati, Ferrari, Lacchini, Colombo, Ferri, Brumana, Pireddu, and in 1965 the seminarians Bottazzi and Fonatanesi to start the new seminary in Los Quillayes, followed by Ramos and Leita.

The increase in personnel brought the expansion of the apostolic activities. In 1951 at the arrival of Fr. Sala they assumed a parish in the periphery. Available there was the church of Sta. Sofia destroyed by the 1940 earthquake and abandoned by the Carmelites for lack of funds. The Barnabites in August 1951 had the courage to assume the responsibility to rebuild it. Fr. Sala and Fr. Fior were assigned to the task and in August 1954 Cardinal Carro, Archbishop of Santiago, blessed the new beautiful church. Soon also all the infrastructures of the parish were added: rectory, youth center, kindergarten, a first-aid polyclinic, and later the grade school "Eduardo Edwar" free for more than 1000 pupils.

The religious problem in Chile, as in all South America, is the educational problem and viceversa: the future generations are formed in the schools, denominational or lay. This is why the Bishops were very much interested in creating as many catholic schools as possible. So the Barnabites in 1953 accepted the "El Salvador" school in San Vicente, South of Santiago. They started with 58 students, but already in June 1955 the Cardinal and the Apostolic Nuncio, Sebastian Baggio, were able to inaugurate a new building which today has over 800 pupils.

In 1955 the fourth house was opened in Los Quillayes, outside Santiago. The old residence of the Governor becomes the formation house of novices and scholastics preparing themselves to be the local Barnabites of the future. And looking at the future may the inaugural words the kids of La Serena wrote to Fr. Sala, while building the church, become a reality:

"May the solitary star of our flag, symbol of light and peace, gifts of Divine Providence, illumine our path."

The “Toldito”

La Serena offers one of the climate most suitable for astronomical activities, and this is why on the top of Mount CERRO TOLOLO an observatory has been built, which is second only to Mt. Palomar in California. Also our school in La Serena has its own observatory built by Fr. Battista Picetti, and inaugurated in August 1977. There are two floors: on the first there is a photo laboratory; on the second the telescope with an 8-inch lens, with an electronic photometer.

In Los Quillayes the Fathers have extended their apostolate behind the boundaries of the seminary to four chapels, the local hospital, and the Poor of St. Clair Monastery. Since the area does not have a parish church the Fathers have built on their property a chapel dedicated to Our Lady Mother of Divine Providence, blessed by Cardinal of Santiago, and open to the public.

A special mention goes to the “Father Semeria Foundation,” an institute for children in trouble, founded by Fr. Bottazzi, but run by lay people. So an activity very much in tune with the Zaccarian style of apostolate understood as a cooperative effort between religious and laity.

E. ARGENTINA

1990 has marked the fortieth anniversary of the Barnabite presence in Argentina. The official celebration took place on October 7 with a Mass presided by the local Ordinary, Bishop Jorge Novak, with commemorative speech by Fr. George Graif.

The Government was represented by the Supervisor of S.N.E.P. (Superintendencia Nacional de la Enseñanza Privada), professor Luis Eduardo Imperatore, who expressed to the Fathers his great appreciation for “the persevering witness as educators and as priests, enriched with a crystal clear soul, and the untiring and affectionate dedication to so many generations of students.”

In a beautiful letter Bishop Novak praised the Fathers for their courageous initial decision to settle at the service of one of the most humble and forgotten population, locating the school in open fields. He also stated: “My relationship with the St. Paul school allows me to give testimony about the immense value of the Barnabite effort to animate and to lead this center of evangelization on the right road. The best and the most authentic testimonies in praise of this Institute of education are not so much the praises, although from high places, but the spontaneous and convinced gratitude by the pupils and alumni who today with their families exalt and celebrate St. Paul, grateful for the profound life lessons received here.”

On its part the local municipality of Berazategui, with a Decree of December 1, 1989, effective on January 1, 1990, in honor of the Barnabites officially changed the name of the town from “El Plato” to SAN PABLO” and named the surrounding streets as “St. Anthony M. Zaccaria Street,” “St. Alexander Sauli Street,” “St. Francis Bianchi Street,” and “Barnabite Fathers Street.”

The Barnabites landed in Argentina in 1948. On January 1949 they spotted a 18.000 square meters piece of land in a very attractive and beautiful location, close-by a pine wood, but they had no funds. Before going to the owner they turned to St. Joseph. They obtained the land at .60 Pesos per square meter on condition they would build a chapel and a residence for the Fathers to insure the religious assistance for the local people. The agreement was for the end of March, the month dedicated to St. Joseph, but by the 30th they were 10,000 Pesos short! St. Joseph came to their rescue. On March 31 a friend landed them the 10,000 Pesos without interest, and on April 30 another friend who had to go to Italy for business, entrusted

into the hands of the Fathers another 10,000 Pesos with the freedom to use them at their discretion.

The first Barnabite station in El Plato was established: a wooden prefabricated house, a chapel with sacristy, six rooms and a sala. How did they get this house? The Fathers had shopped around, but all prices were too high for them. They made a last attempt in the name of St. Joseph. As soon as the owner saw their cassock, said to be in need of their advice, which they gave without hesitation, and then made their request. The price of the house from 35,000 went down to 24,000 Pesos with a down payment of 10,000, and the rest when possible. The residence was inaugurated on May 8, 1949, feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph.

It did not last too long: on September 3 a blast of kerosene in the kitchen reduced everything into ashes. Many were the words of sympathy but very few the helping hands, except for the Bonfiglio family who housed and fed the Fathers for few months in so far as they attended to the spiritual needs of the local people.

A stone house was needed. The insurance funds collected were not enough. On the Epiphany of 1950, the octogenarian Mrs. Maria Badini Molteni called the Fathers and said: "Tonight the Three Kings have come for you too!" and presented them with a check of 50,000 Pesos. The house was built in three months to become the first boarding-school of the Barnabites in Argentina. It was dedicated to their patron saint, St. Paul. The first student arrived on March 31, and in April they were eight, to become soon fifty. At the end of the scholastic year (March through December) the State Commission ran the exams passing all of them with great praises for the Barnabites, and the SAN PABLO was incorporated into the "Ensenanza Oficial de la Provincia de la Plata."

Many were the requests for admission, but there was no room, therefore with great courage Fr. General Idelfonso Clerici gave permission for new construction to accommodate 120 students. The old building was incorporated in the new one, inaugurated at the end of 1952, including a swimming pool with a park of pine trees. It was a great accomplishment but still insufficient to the demands. Through many other sacrifices and the help of Divine Providence, the Fathers were able to acquire in November 1953, another adjacent lot to accommodate the present structures: St. Paul school, St. Paul parish center, St. Alexander Sauli novitiate, and the sport facilities. On March 11, 1957, another dream became a reality as the Government brought the school under the direct jurisdiction of the National Department of Education. This allowed the school to receive proper State support as envisioned by the Argentine Constitutions.

On October 25, 1975 great celebrations marked the 25th anniversary of the foundation. The Mass then was celebrated by the Superior Provincial Fr. Onorino Galbiati surrounded by the Fathers Michael Morra, Francis Colciago, Louis Ferrazzi, and the Deacon Romeo Farina.

During the next 25 years the school was enlarged with the "Jardin de Infantes" in 1977, and the "Ciclo Secundario" was added, the "Primario" in 1978.

In 1949 the Fathers' dream was to create a small agrarian school with a little chapel dedicated to "Our Lady of the Angels." Today the parish church stands besides the school with 800 students and a full cycle of studies whose mission statement is:

- a privileged place for human development through a serious assimilation of culture;
- a true Catholic school, aiming at educating to committed brotherhood;
- center of profound and open evangelization;
- a valid instrument to bring to reality a communion of the young with God, and of the youth among themselves.

In 1987 the Formation House was open, next to the school. Fr. George Graif in his commemorative speech for the 40th anniversary noted that the St. Paul's school is located between two meaningful realities in the eyes of the faithful: on one side the little Barnabite cemetery, where are at rest the Fathers Romolo Rainotti, Tullio Orfeo, Nicola Ferri, and Bro. Domenic Mollicone, that is, those who tilled the soil and fertilized it with their sweat, and now intercede from heaven for the house on the other side: the House of Formation, where the new hopes of the Argentine Barnabite Province are nourished.

(ECO, 1990, 4)

F. AFGHANISTAN

If the invasion of the Red Army had not pushed Afghanistan on the news front line, few would know about this country. Not so for the Barnabites who, since 1933, are the spiritual guides all of the Christians in this country.

Why was such a delicate task entrusted to the Barnabites? When and wanted their presence in Afghanistan?

This mysterious land-locked country in the heart of Central Asia - between enigmatic Red China, the Middle East in turmoil, teeming Pakistan and India, the forbidden asiatic Russia - was closed for thousands of years to any western civilization, but finally in 1920 under a new Amir, King Amanullah, Afghanistan opened its doors to western culture and western mechanized civilization. He sent a diplomatic delegation to Europe to obtain from different governments the official recognition of Afghanistan as an independent State. Treaties were signed with the major European countries and in a few years scores of doctors, teachers, engineers from these nations tried to bring into the 20th century a people and a country that by western standards was still in the Middle Ages. But if Afghanistan opened its doors to technical progress it kept these doors fanatically and tightly closed to democracy and to religious freedom. There is still the death penalty for any Afghan that would dare to abandon Islam. No missionaries are allowed, and at least up to 1950 no one who wasn't attached to an Embassy or employed by the government was free to settle in the country.

On June 30, 1921 Italy was the first nation to sign a treaty with Afghanistan, opening the doors for the establishment of official delegations in the two capitals.

The Italian government asked King Amanullah, who was eager to show his appreciation, for one condition, that is, the right to include in the Embassy staff a Catholic chaplain for the religious assistance of the Embassy personnel and also of the Italians hired by the Afghans. The clause was included in the treaty.

Meanwhile the development envisioned by the King was bringing into Kabul many Europeans, technicians and members of the many Embassies, which were opening in the capital. The insistent request by Catholics for religious assistance compelled the Italian government to implement that clause. The Afghan government assured full cooperation so that the chaplain, abstaining from any religious activity among the Afghans, would have full freedom to exercise his ministry among the foreigners who so desired.

"I would be so happy if the Moslems in foreign lands could have a Mullah to serve them," the Prime Minister Muhammad Hascin Khan said, "and so I am glad that the Christian foreigners residing in Afghanistan have a priest to take care of them."

In 1931 the Italian Government asked the Holy See to appoint a chaplain, and Pius XI gladly gave his approval, and also decided to reserve to himself the choice of the chaplain: "This mission needs a Barnabite" were his words, and he personally chose Fr. Egidio

Caspani, who was from his own hometown, and at the moment was professor of theology, superior, and master of students at our International Seminary in Rome.

“Sons of Paul,” Pius XI wrote to the Barnabites in the act of entrusting them the Afghan mission, “you must receive with enthusiasm this occasion offered you to evangelize new peoples. You are going to write one of the most beautiful chapters of the history of your Congregation, since you are the first, after twenty centuries of Christianity, to penetrate in this country and to bring to it the light of the Holy Gospel. It entails and it will entail sacrifices, but there is no great work without sacrifices.” And so by accepting the desire of the Holy Father the Barnabites started this delicate mission.

In order to help Fr. Caspani to organize the chaplaincy and above all to have another priest ready in the eventuality that religious freedom would arrive for the Afghans, Father General wished to send with Fr. Caspani a second priest. But because only one was allowed according to the treaty, this priest was going to be disguised as a layman, employed as a diplomatic courier and assistant chancellor by the Italian Embassy. The man assigned to the job was Mr. Ernest Cagnacci.

Fr. Caspani and Mr. Cagnacci arrived in Kabul on Christmas day of 1932. The religious and moral assistance to the Catholics, or rather to Christians of all denominations, started officially on January 1, 1933, the Holy Year of the Redemption, and the 400th anniversary of the approval of the Barnabite Order. An important date because it officially marked the return of Christianity in Afghanistan and of the Barnabites in Asia.

The parish entrusted to our care covered the whole country: 650,000 Kms. The Catholic chapel, dedicated to Our Lady of Divine Providence, by common agreement among all the interested countries, was located in the Italian legation. In 1966 a separated building with chapel and rectory was inaugurated on the grounds of the Italian Embassy in Kabul.

Up to no seven Barnabite priests have served in this mission, giving a splendid testimony of priestly life.

Fr. Egidio Caspani (1933-1947), assisted by Fr. Ernest Cagnacci, who officially was a diplomatic courier, wrote at the end of his mission a very precious book, “Afghanistan, Crossroad of Asia” (Ed. Vallardi, Milan, 1955), which has been one of the most comprehensive books on Afghanistan.

Fr. John Bernasconi (1947-1957), then Superior General of the Order (1964-1976), was assisted by Fr. Aldo Boschetti, who too officially was a diplomatic courier. Through his personal prestige Fr. Bernasconi was able to obtain the entrance and permanent residence in the country, of the Little Sisters of Fr. Charles de Foucauld as nurses at the Afghan hospital. They were even granted permission to wear their religious habit. He was also instrumental for the entrance of the Dominican priest Fr. Serge De Beaurecuel as a teacher at the Kabul University. These are by far the most precious of Fr. Bernasconi’s many accomplishments.

Fr. Raphael Nannetti (1957-1965) served alone in a mission, which was becoming more and more delicate with an increasing number of Catholics. He saw the realization of his predecessor’s dream: a totally new church with a rectory.

Fr. Angel Panigati (1965-1990) has been the animator of this “Christian presence” during some of the most difficult times Afghanistan has encountered in modern history. It is not easy to summarize his many activities. Beloved of every person, Afghans, foreigners, Catholics, Protestants, unbelievers. His home was everybody’s home; always abreast with all kind of information on all the foreigners residing in Afghanistan. His prestige and his moral authority, both as a priest and as a human being, are explicitly recognized everywhere. Of his many activities the ecumenical one may have been the most beautiful one. “We thank you

very much for the human warmth and the Christian love you have shown in helping us during such difficult times. We have taken gigantic steps in our reciprocal understanding,” we read in a parchment signed by the Protestants in Kabul.

Fr. Joseph Moretti (1990-...) took over the mission in Kabul. He was able to hold the post during the Russian occupation, and eventually during the revolution he was the only foreign diplomat left in Kabul, in the Italian Embassy compound. To protect himself from possible rockets attacks he set his quarter in the middle of the Embassy compound, but one rocket found its way all the way to his hideout. Father was severely wounded, but with the help of friends he was able to reach a hospital in Pakistan, and then eventually he was back in Italy. What will happen in the future? The possibility of a return to Kabul is always open, if the political circumstances will allow it one day.

G. NORTH AMERICA

In 1947, when Fr. Caspani and Fr. Cagnacci left their post in Afghanistan to return to Italy, they took a tour around the world, to carry on a commission entrusted to them by Father General Idelphonse Clerici: to search for a Barnabite foundation in the United States and/or Canada. Fr. Emil Scott just before the World War II had made a first attempt in Canada, but as the war broke out he had to return to Europe empty handed.

The journey from Afghanistan to America took four months. In Bombay, India, they became friends with a Canadian missionary, Fr. Lapierre of the Holy Cross Fathers, who later will be instrumental for the foundation in Buffalo, N.Y. With letters of recommendation from Monsignor Vagnozzi, Archbishop Roberts, the Jesuit Provincial, and even from the United States Ambassador in Kabul, they sailed towards America.

On April 24, 1948, they landed in San Pedro (Los Angeles harbor). They approached the Bishops of Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sacramento, but there was no room for another Congregation! Only Bishop Buddy of San Diego gave them some hope inviting them to teach Latin at the Seminary while helping in the Italo-American parish of Our Lady of the Rosary.

They decided to write to several Bishops to see where the Barnabites could be needed, then they left the West coast to reach Chicago. Here they started to receive the answers, but all of them were negative. Even New York was hopeless with a list of 15 Religious Congregations waiting to be admitted. So they headed for Washington, D.C. It was July 5, 1948, feast of our Holy Founder, St. Anthony M. Zaccaria. The Apostolic Delegate, Bishop Cicognani, suggested them to give up the idea of a foundation in the United States.

On the way to Canada, they stopped in Buffalo, N.Y., guests of the Scalabrinian Fathers. Fr. Prevedello made them aware that the Bishop of Buffalo was planning to build several Catholic high schools. Anyway they proceeded for Ottawa, Canada, where the Apostolic Delegate, Bishop Antonuzzi, gave them letters of recommendations for various Bishops.

Archbishop Roy of Quebec told them that if they could send three priests, one of them French or Belgian as pastor, he would give them a parish.

In Montreal, at the Oratory of St. Joseph, they came across their friend from India, Fr. Lapierre, who introduced them to the Superior General of the Holy Cross Fathers, who very kindly gave them a letter for the Bishop of Buffalo, a member of his Congregation.

On August 27, 1948, they went back to Buffalo. Bishop O'Hara offered them the possibility of staffing one of the future High Schools, once the Fathers would have

Americanize themselves. Meantime, he asked them to visit Msgr. Gambino, pastor of Holy Cross in Buffalo, and Msgr. Tronolone, pastor of St. Joseph, in Niagara Falls.

After paying a visit to Cardinal Spellman in New York, on October 4, 1948, they sailed for Italy to present their report to Father General. There were three possibilities: San Diego, Buffalo, and Quebec. Buffalo seemed to offer a most positive future, so a correspondence was started with Bishop O'Hara for the canonical procedure to establish a Religious Community in his diocese.

On January 4, 1952, Fr. Caspani and Fr. Cagnacci were back in Buffalo again, guests of Msgr. Gambino at Holy Cross. Bishop O'Hara, just before becoming Cardinal of Philadelphia, made arrangements for them to occupy the 2nd floor of the former St. Vincent's Orphanage at Main and Riley streets in Buffalo. His successor, Bishop Burke, promised them the school under construction in North Tonawanda. In September they moved at Riley Street. In November Fr. Andreani arrived from Italy and was assigned to St. Joseph in Niagara Falls. By this time Fr. Anthony Bianco and Fr. John Lisi were taking courses at Canisius College, and Fr. Augusto Pucci and other Fathers arrived, including a group of Theology students.

Although the accommodations at Riley Street were ample and comfortable, the Fathers were eager to find their own place. After many unsuccessful tries, Divine Providence came to their help. One evening the housekeeper of St. Joseph's in Niagara Falls told Fr. Andreani about a Polish couple who could help them to find some land. They turned out to be Mr. and Mrs. Walter Ciurczak. "Not long ago," Mr. Ciurczak said to Fr. Andreani, "I had a stroke, and my wife Helen got sick too. We turned to the Blessed Mother Mary for help, promising her that we would donate a portion of our farm to a religious institution that would use it in her honor. We both recovered and we have been waiting for the right person: the Blessed Mother sends you, Father." The Ciurczaks decided to donate, for one dollar, to the Fathers 15 of their 100 acres farm, located in Lewiston, New York.

From a picture of a statuary group of Our Lady of Fatima on a road outside Boston, Fr. Andreani got a dream, and one day he presented to the Fathers a gentleman saying: "Meet the donor of the statue of Our Lady of Fatima." That was the beginning of Our Lady of Fatima Shrine.

On the same grounds on September 21, 1961, Bishop Burke blessed the St. Anthony M. Zaccaria seminary. At the same time the Fathers started to teach at Bishop Gibbons High School in North Tonawanda, where they moved to live on April 3, 1964, emptying the house on Riley Street. It lasted until 1971, when the Bishop was forced to close the school due to the crisis of Catholic Schools affecting the whole country.

But that very same summer of 1971, the Lord opened new doors for our Community with an invitation to teach at the Bethlehem Catholic High School in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, starting that same year. After been guests of the diocese for eight years, finally on October 28, 1989 Bishop Thomas Welsh dedicated the chapel and blessed the Barnabite Spiritual Center, located in Bethlehem.

During these years, Bishop Charles Buddy of San Diego, had kept reminding Fr. Caspani that the doors of his diocese were open for the Barnabites, so again accompanied by Fr. Cagnacci he headed West. Another Barnabite, Fr. Peter Bianchi who, after some years in Chile, in 1952 accepted to move to California as pastor of Highlands, a tiny village of Chicanos, welcomed them. While waiting for a final settlement they helped in various parishes and offered their spiritual care at Mercy Hospital. In 1957 Bishop Buddy sent Fr. Caspani as assistant to Msgr. Trivisonno, pastor of Our Lady of the Rosary, the national

Italian church, with the promise that at the death of Monsignor, the Barnabites would take over the parish.

Meantime there was an invitation from the archdiocese of Los Angeles to teach in a high school in Santa Barbara, but that meant to have to leave San Diego. The invitation was accepted but instead of Santa Barbara the Fathers landed in San Pedro to staff a brand new high school. A conflict with the project on the East coast was inevitable: school personnel was limited, therefore in 1961 the Fathers left definitely San Pedro but not California, where they will be back in 1969, when they took over the Our Lady of the Rosary Parish following the death of Msgr. Trivisonno.

At the same time the doors were opening in Canada too. Bishop Joseph F. Ryan of Hamilton, Ontario, asked the Barnabites to establish a new parish in Oakville, to serve the great number of immigrants. Fr. General Scott expressed his approval with a letter dated October 29, 1960; on October 22, 1961 the first parish bulletin was published by the first pastor, Fr. George Predelli. In 1964 the new church was blessed, build according to the principles of the new liturgy calling for an active participation of the faithful.

The Canadian foundation was enlarged when the new Bishop of Hamilton, Francis Reading, asked the North American Province to staff other two parishes: Our Lady of the Assumption, in Elfrida, (1977), and St. John, in Guelph, (1978). Eventually in the year 2000, St. John was given back to the Diocese, and in 2006 even Elfrida.

Worth mentioning is the spiritual care given by the Lewiston Community to the Holy Family parish in the Tuscarora Indian Reservation, serving all the Catholic Indians of the Niagara Peninsula.

H. SPAIN

The desire and proposal to open a foundation in Spain was presented in the General Chapter of 1958, to be realized then in the Chapter of 1964.

The decisive element was the vocation problem inside the Congregation; aware that at the time Spain was a land very reach with vocations to the priesthood and to religious life. Fr. Anthony Cozzi and Fr. Louis Origlia had journey through the land more than once always depicting a picture full of hope, since many Bishops were more than willing to welcome us into their dioceses. But the Congregation at the moment was not able to launch itself into the new foundation. Finally the go was given in 1964, and the two Fathers were back in Spain to concretize the plans, selecting the diocese of Palencia. The immediate plan was to open a minor seminary.

Once the land was acquired, the Christian Brothers acted as big brothers, offering assistance and hospitality in their “Santiago Apostol” institute in Bilbao, while the construction was finalized and completed. This allowed the Fathers to learn the language and to be in contact with the youth, while assisting the Brothers as priests.

The seminary was dedicated to the young and holy Barnabite seminarian Diego Martinez. The original design by an architect firm from Madrid, was in the shape of a pontifical tiara with a capacity of 240 beds. The laying of the foundations took place on June 29, 1965, by the Bishop of Palencia and our Superior General.

I. POLAND

In the climate of exuberance and hope created in 1981 by “Solidarity,” the Barnabites started to dream of the possibility of a foundation in Poland. Aware of the many difficulties due to the communist reality of the nation, the Superiors started a long and laborious campaign of public relations to survey and probe the possibility. For five years the Superior general, Fr. Giuseppe Bassotti, accompanied by the first Polish Barnabite, Fr. Casimir Lorek, and various confreres, Frs. Ranaldi, Buzzi, Marchioni, Panigati, Sironi, and the Mother general of the Angelics, visited the country, establishing very crucial preliminary contacts. In the summer of 1988, the decision was made to move on to the realization of the project. The first attempt in Krakow was a disappointment when Cardinal Franciszek Macharski said flatly: “there is no room for you in the diocese!” Instead the audience with the Cardinal of Warsaw, Jozef Glemp, was very positive. Fr. Bassotti presented to him our motivations:

1. the increasing number of Polish young men who were asking admission in our Congregation;
2. the desire to serve the Polish church in the spirit of St. Anthony M. Zaccaria, centered of the youth apostolate;
3. the need to stay in large centers for cultural and apostolic activities;
4. the willingness of the Barnabites to open a language center to strengthen the existing cultural ties between Italy and Poland, and, following the Holy Founder who was a medical doctor and a priest, a medical center to help the youth in facing the problems of the family, abortion, alcoholism, drugs...
5. to establish in Warsaw a house of formation.

The Cardinal’s answer was: “Sure, if the Barnabites are in Afghanistan, they can stay also in Poland!” It was a clear reference to the visit by Fr. Panigati, who had been chaplain in Kabul. “New enormous districts are developing around the city... Yes, there is room for you too...,” the Cardinal concluded.

Having obtained, after incredible difficulties, the juridical recognition by the government as the “Congregation of the Clerics Regular of St. Paul – Barnabites,” with Fr. Casimir Lorek as Legal Representative, in June 1989, we were able to purchase a parcel of land of almost 8000 sqm. on the outskirts of the city.

The exiting modest house was restructured with the valuable contribution of the three postulants Darius, Jacek and Bogdan, and it was officially inaugurated on August 25, 1990. Finally the dream had become reality.

J. PHILIPPINES

The story of the Barnabite Congregation in the Philippines started in the Summer of 1988 when our Superior general, Fr. Joseph Bassotti, joined Mother Armanda Ponsiglione, Mother general of the Angelics, for the inaugural ceremonies of their brand new building, a pre-school and convent combination. The first-hand experience of the smashing success by the Angelics in only two years, and the encouragement by the warm and pressing invitation of the Camillian Fathers could not leave Father General in peace, unless he would further look into the possibility of expanding the Congregation in such promising and fertile land. Therefore, by Christmas 1988 he extended an invitation to Fr. Anthony Bianco, Provincial Superior of the North American Province, and to Fr. Frank Papa, former director of formation

in the same Province, to join him and Fr. Erich G. Hennings, Assistant general, for an exploratory mission, unanimously backed by the approval of the general Council.

Fr. Bianco and Fr. Papa reached Manila on the evening of Tuesday, January 31, 1989, welcomed at the airport by Fr. General and Sister Teresa Bianco. Fr. Hennings had traveled with them from the States, having attended the Provincial Chapter of North-America Province.

For three weeks, they enjoyed the exquisite hospitality of the Angelic Sisters who put at their disposal not only their facilities, but also themselves and all their contacts. The stay was marked by dialogues with many religious men and women, especially the Camillians. They met the Most Reverend Protacio G. Gungon, Bishop of Antipolo, the Apostolic Nuncio, the staff of the Italian Embassy, and numerous lay people. All of them were unanimously encouraging them to come to offer their ministry to a very large population, deeply devout and hungry for God, but short of priestly service. At the same time, they were urging to take advantage of the flourishing Christian Communities (the nation is 95% Catholic), source of abundant vocations.

They could not resist the evident call from the Lord, therefore Fr. Papa enthusiastically said his yes to Fr. General's invitation to leave behind the beautiful Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima and establish the foundation of the Barnabites in Filipino soil. Meantime, Fr. Hennings gladly accepted to keep him company until August.

Once the decision was taken they traveled tirelessly, looking for a piece of land suitable for an elementary and technical high school building, since this had been the wish expressed by Bishop Gungon. The search was frustrated day after day until finally two days before their departure they found two parcels of land with a total of 31.000 sqm. on the hills of Antipolo, as a possible sight for a future seminary and possible school. But how to start a recruitment program? The Camillian Fathers, especially Fr. Ivo Anselmi, rector of their College Seminary, came to the rescue. They offered them forty-four names from their own list of young men interested in the priesthood and religious life. An introductory letter was drafted with the invitation to join the newly established Order in the Philippines. For immediate accommodations, they bought the house used by Angelic Sisters before moving into their new building. By the time the Fathers left on February 20, everything had been set in motion for the new foundation.

After a couple of months of preparation, Fr. Papa said good-by to the confreres of the North American Province, and on May 11, 1989, he set foot on Filipino soil to officially begin the new foundation. He found the little house like new after the renovations done according to specifications. Besides taking care of the house furniture and utensils, Fr. Papa eagerly examined the answers generated by the letters sent to the 44 possible candidates. As it turned out, five young men accepted the invitation and on June 12 they moved in the new formation house. The next day they all joined the St. Camillus College faculty and student-body for the Mass of the Holy Spirit to open the new school year. Ruben, Richelieu, Jesus, Rene and Richard are very enthusiastic young men eager to learn, yes, but most of all to express their attachment to God as an integral aspect of their life. Like all Filipinos, they are extremely courteous, kind, and respectful. As any young men, they love sports, especially basketball, the national sport, and vacation days. They dream to become priests and Barnabites one day, like many others who wish they could but cannot afford it. Yes, indeed, one of the major obstacles is the financial one. Most of them come from very poor and large families. The need therefore to organize a sponsorship program to support them.

While the seminarians were busy with their studies at St. Camillus College, the Fathers started to organize a recruitment campaign. Meantime, their priestly service was requested in many surrounding chapels for Sunday Mass.

So, in a short time, the roots of St. Anthony M. Zaccaria had been planted deep in this new land. People, clergy and non clergy, keep asking, “Barnabites, what?” Then Fr. Papa would not hesitate to take one of the brochures brought from the States asking them to share the information with their friends. It was visible to experience the fruitful protection and intercession of the Holy Founder.

For the first six months was Hennnings was able to assist Fr. Papa, but then he had to return to Rome for his duties as Assistant general. He was substituted by the enthusiastic Fr. Vincent Posillico to finish the school year. Finally in June 1990, Fr. Aldo Rizzi arrived from Italy, after 25 years in Africa, to join the new foundation.

Meantime with the agreement of the Superior general, the first land bought in Antipolo was sold, because it was too far from the city and the College of the Camillians where the students were attending classes. The search went on for another site, and it materialized on Apitong St. in Marikina Heights. It will take two years for the construction of the St. Anthony Ma. Zaccaria Seminary, to be inaugurated on July 5, 1992. The same year, the newly ordained Fr. Mario Zaninelli arrived from Italy to joined the Community. By now, then, everything was rolling under the protection of Our Lady, Mother of Divine Providence, promising a bright future for the Congregation in Asia.

K. ALBANIA

It was during the 1994 General Chapter that the Superior General, Fr. Giuseppe Bassotti, aware of a desire among some members of the Center-South Italy province, presented the proposal of a Barnabite mission in Albania.

The Chapter with the Deliberation # 124, accepted the proposal and entrusted to the Provincial Chapter the task to examined and evaluate the possibility of such a presence. And so the 1994 provincial Chapter decided to entrust this search to the provincial Council. The Council sent Frs. Enrico Moschetta and Ferruccio Trufi for a first approach between June 22 and 25, 1995, followed by another visit in May 28-31 for more concrete details from the city of Milot. After a careful evaluation of the pro and con, the provincial Council on June 22, 1996, in Lodi, approved the foundation in Milot with 4 votes in favor and 1 against.

On June 9, 1996, the general council unanimously ratified the decision with the following conditions:

- a) *As soon as possible another confrere will join Fr. Trufi, who is in charge of the foundation, to live and work with him, and they will be associated with the Trani community;*
- b) *In due time and with promptness there should be a definition of the specific activities of this Barnabite presence, which should not be limited to the parish only;*
- c) *The provincial superior shall be kept well informed and consulted about the developments of this missionary foundation and he will keep the general council well informed;*
- d) *The present approval by the general council id for “three years; the question shall be reexamined in light of the experience of the next three years by July 1999, so*

that it can be presented, after careful study, to the 2000 General Chapter for final approval, upon the approval by the preparatory provincial council.

Having received all the required approvals, Frs. Ferruccio Trufi and Giovanni Nitti laid the foundation of the new foundation in Albania, in the parish of Milot, in the diocese of Durazzo-Tirana, in August 1996.

It was possible to start immediately with some apostolic activities since the church of St. Nicholas of Bari had survived the Communist regime. The Fathers were also able to have the old convent, which had been used as an apartment building for 8 families during the regime. Naturally both buildings were in need of extensive renovations.

During the Communist regime all private properties, including the ones of the church, had been repossessed by the state. At present the government is supposed to make full restitution but naturally it is a very long and complicated process. This has caused some problems to obtain space needed for the apostolic activities.

At first the two Fathers were guests of the Rogationist Fathers in Shënkoll, until they were able to acquire a small house by the convent. On December 6, 1996, feast of St. Nicholas, patron of the parish, the bishop of Durazzo-Tirana officially entrusted the mission of Milot to the Barnabite Fathers.

L. MEXICO

Starting from the General Chapter of 2000, the project of a new foundation in Mexico (already ventilated before, but never realized), became more feasible with the repeated visits to Monterrey by Fr. Philip Lovison, and the impetus given by the Superior General Fr. Giovanni Villa and His Council.

For this purpose, in July of 2003, Fr. Santiago Ramos Plaza (born in Camasobres, Palencia, July 25, 1939) and Fr. Antonio Bottazzi (born in Milan on October 10, 1938), were assigned to Monterrey. They began to lend their pastoral service in the parishes of *S. Teresa y San Isidro Labrador* and the *Virgen de Zapopan*, to know the socio-religious reality of the typical population of the "Norte" and weaving contacts with the diocesan ecclesiastical authorities, looking for a home for the future foundation.

At the beginning of the following year, the Episcopal Vicar Leopoldo González offered the chapel of St. Teresita del Niño Jesus in the Municipality of S. Catarina, which included three other chapels, with the promise that it would soon become a parish, ensuring also the construction of a convent for the religious community. On May 13, 2004 the Archbishop of Monterrey, Jose Francisco Robles Ortega, notified the Fathers of the official decision to entrust to the Barnabites a parish in S. Catarina, and on June 18 of that year he confirm the decision, indicating precisely the one of *S. Teresita*.

And so, on August 6, 2004, at 8:00 pm, in a solemn celebration presided by the Auxiliary Bishop of Monterrey, Bishop Gustavo Rodriguez Vega (at the presence of the Superior General, Fr. Giovanni Villa, the Episcopale Vicar, Leopoldo Gonzalez, the Episcopal Vicar for Religious Life, Claudio Beccarelli, the parish priests where the Barnabites had been exercising their apostolate, the same Frs. Ramos and Bottazzi, and other diocesan priests of the deanery), the decree establishing the new parish and the appointment of P. Ramos as parish priest, and Fr. Bottazzi a parochial vicar was solemnly read. Right away the two Fathers got down to business to organize the pastoral care, taking into account the already existing structures and pastoral groups working in separate chapels. On November 3, 2004 they were also able to move in the new parish house, although not yet completed.

Since then a series of arrivals and departures has characterized the community life. On November 9, 2004 Fr. Paul Visintin (born in Amblar, Trent, June 18, 1944) joined the Community. On September 5, 2005, the parish priest, Fr. Ramos, went back to Spain, and on September 11, Fr. Bottazzi took charge as parish priest. On January 19, 2006 the Community was canonically set with the arrival of Fr. Domingo Alberto Pinilla (born in Bahia Blanca, Argentina, September 24, 1967), and on April 29, 2009 a fourth Barnabite joined them, Fr. Juan Ramirez Saud (born in Santiago, Chile, February 18, 1953). On July 4, 2010, Fr. Pinilla left the parish to go to Albania, and on August 21, 2011, arrival in the Community Fr. Nsiku Kahwarha (born in Ludaha, South-Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo, February 22, 1964).

The parish is still growing steadily and as "Pauline, spiritually as well as materially, thanks to the effective action of our confreres and the lay associates, with great common satisfaction.

M. INDIA

In our history the cities of Madras (today Chennai) e Pondichery, on the East coast of India, are well known. Our missionaries who were longing to reach the Barnabite mission in the kingdoms of Ava and Pegù in Burma (today Myanmar), used them as transition ports and also as apostolic ecclesiastical reference.

Today the Barnabites have set foot on the land of the fabulous India arriving not by sea but by air, in Bangalore, set at center South of the nation, about 200 km from Chennai.

During these last years two vocations have enriched our Congregation, both of them coming from the State of South Kerala in India, Father Winson Paul Menachery and Father Varghese Kalambattukudy. Meantime, a number of young men have been asking for admission to our Congregation. Fr. Giovanni Scalese, while he was Assistant General kept contact with them, and made two visit to the country, the first trip with Fr. Winson and the second last year with Fr. Varghese on the occasion of his First Mass at home. In his report to the General Chapter Fr. Scalese explained the immediate need to open a house in India. Assigned to the Philippines, after the General Chapter, with the approval of the General Council, he and Fr. Frank Papa reached the agreement to open the foundation taking turn every six months due to the six months rule about the visa by the Indian government.

Proper contact was made with the Sisters Daughters of Divine Providence, who are were established in Bangalore. Both the Mother General and the local Regional Superior have shown enthusiasm at the idea to have us with them. Therefore, having making contact with Sister Alphonsa Manickathan, and having taken an appointment with the Archbishop of Bangalore, Fr. Papa left Manila for Bangalore, via Singapore, on February 25, 2007. During his one week stay with the Daughters of Divine Providence, Father was able to visit the area looking for a residence, possible schools for our seminarians, local religious communities, and, first of all, on Tuesday, February 27, he paid the visit to Archbishop Dr. Bernard Moras, accompanied by Sr. Alphonsa. The Prelate was very cordial but resolute: he would welcome us in the diocese only if we would set our house outside the city area, unless we would open at the same time a mission in one of the most remote areas of the archdiocese. Not able to open a mission, the Sisters suggested to visit the area in Koskote, on the main road to Chennai, since in the area there is the KRISTU JYOTI COLLEGE for philosophy and theology, run by the Salesian Fathers. They visited the Sisters of Fatima, and the Superior suggested to visit the Piarist Fathers who have just inaugurated their new seminary, not far

from the College, and perhaps they might have room for them. Very kindly the Sisters accompanies them to visit the College, and there they meet one of the Piarist seminarians who accompanies them to their house. There, they were welcomed by their Superior, Fr. Fernando Negro. Fr. Papa asks him about any possibility of staying with them as guests for a couple of years! Father jumps with joy at the idea, and shows them immediately a section of the house which could be used by them. Naturally he will have to check with his provincial superior in Argentina. As the Sisters would say, for sure Divine Providence was looking over them!

Back to Manila on March 3, Fr. Papa sent a detail report on his visit to Fr. General, who, with a letter of March 9, 2007, with the consent of his Council, decided to launch the foundation as soon as possible.

There was the problem of the visa, but, having asked information from other Congregations, Fr. Papa discovered that India has a special treatment for USA citizens, that is, they can have also a ten year Visa with multiple entry, although every six months one must go out of the Country, but able to return the same day. Since Fr. Papa has the American passport, he immediately applied for the Visa to the consular office of India in New York City, by mail, and the ten year visa was granted him immediately. This eliminated the need for the two Fathers to alternate every six months.

Having received news from Fr. Fernando that his Provincial Superior in Argentina had approved the idea to have the Barnabaites as guest in their seminary, Fr. Papa rights away set his departure for Monday, May 21, 2007, while Fr. Scalese informed all the possible candidates who were in contact with him that they were welcomed to join Father at the PIARIST FATHERS FORMATION HOUSE, Nazareth Bhavan, Sy. 56 Kittakannur Village, K.R. PURAM P.O., BANGALORE 56036, at to report at this address the week of May 28. Four of them gave a positive response.

Sunday, May 21, 2007, Fr. Papa left definitely the Philippines to start the new foundation of the Barnabite Congregation in Bangalore, India, as declared by the Superior General, Fr. Giovanni Villa, in his letter of May 4, 2007.

The first four candidates were: Benny Pachanal and Jackson Kattamkottil from South Kerala, Maria Joseph Ahilan and Lawrence Siluvai from Tamil Nadu. All four enrolled at the KRISTU JYOTI COLLEGE, Jackson e Lawrence for the first year in theology, while Benny and Maria Joseph, having already finished theology, tooke the two-years Master Degree in Theology for Youth Ministry.

Fr. Varghese arrived from Italy on August 1, 2007 and joined Fr. Papa to work together for the formation of these candidates, the selection of new candidates who were already knocking at the doors, and the development of the Barnabite presence searching for a property on which to our residence.

In 2008 the temporary arrangements at the seminary of the Piarists led to the needs to look for another residence. Fortunately the Betharramites Fathers agreed to lease to us their novitiate building, which was empty, located next to their formation house. On June 1 the Barnabite community moved to the new residence, while always trying to locate and eventually purchase a land suitable to build their own house, and so stabilize their presence in Bangalore and then in India.

Accusation of Proselitism forced Fr. Papa to leave India. He went back to the Philippines exchanging the place with Fr. Scalese, but he too, after six months had to leave, substituted by Fr. Gabriel Patil.

Meanwhile, the small community had to change residence a second time, in late May of 2010, because the Betharramite Fathers needed the house for their novitiate program. This time it was opted for a private house, rented, which has been adapted to the needs of the small community of about a dozen aspirants. Life in the new residence started in June 2010 with the beginning of the school year and with the arrival of Father Gabriele Patil from the United States, he set to complete the community with Father Varghese Kalambattukudy Poulouse.

The effort to find and purchase a land was finally concluded in 2012. The property is adjacent to the one of the Don Calabria priests and Sisters, located in the outskirts of Bangalore. On March 16, 2013 Father General Francisco Da Silva, together with Fr. Frank Papa, Assistant General, blessed the corner-stone of the new building. When completed in the summer of 2014, the new residence will provide room for the aspirants, the professed students together with the Fathers' Community. Meantime the postulants are sent to the Novitiate of Marikina, Philippines, and the newly professed to Rome for their theology, until the new building is ready in Bangalore.

INDONESIA

The missionary activities of the Catholic Church are unhampered by any calamities, be it natural or man-made. The church continues to fulfill her mission and to reach out to all the ends of the earth to proclaim the Gospel. Many religious men and women and laypeople have devoted their time and effort to become ambassadors of the Gospel. They reach out to those who are in the margins of society, people who are in need of spiritual comfort and material assistance.

In the past six years, the Barnabite Fathers have been active in the mission activities of the church. Currently, the community of St. Francis Xavier Maria Bianchi formation house trains young Indonesian seminarians for this missionary call. This community is in the Diocese of Maumere in the Island of Flores in Indonesia. Flores is the only island among the thirteen thousand islands of the archipelago that the majority of the people practices the Catholic faith. The main religion of the Republic of Indonesia is Islam.

The Barnabite Activity

The primary concern of the Congregation of the Barnabite Fathers in the Diocese is to collaborate with the local ordinary. The Bishop has entrusted us to work in collaboration with the local congregation of sisters who are in charge of an orphanage. We celebrate the Mass with the sisters, together with the orphans, most of whom have physical and mental disabilities. We also collaborate with some parishes to serve chapels in far-flung places that can only be reached by crossing over several mountains. These activities offer great opportunities to our seminarians to develop their skills and innate talents and to grow spiritually and emotionally as future priests and missionaries.

The Barnabite Thrust of Formation

The team of formators assigned to the mission in Indonesia strives to educate the seminarians in their day to day activities by helping them to discover themselves and, at the same time, accompanying them on their spiritual journey. Through manual labors, seminarians are given the opportunity to enhance their skills and their ability to manage their time and resources. This is beneficial for them especially in sustaining and developing the mission in the future. By the sweat of their brows, the seminarians work; for as Saint Paul says, "he who does not work must not eat."

True to the spirit of Saint Paul, the formators and the seminarians work together hand in hand. This collaboration helps them to save money for food and other needs, while at the same time, keeps them rooted to the earth and teaches them the value of hard work and humility as the key to success.

The Impact of the Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has greatly affected many people in the world. We are aware of the psychological, emotional, and financial insecurity it has created. However, despite the pandemic's seemingly negative impact, it has taught us that through unity we can prevail over any obstacles.

Our Indonesian mission has not been spared of the pandemic's raging effects. Due to it, our bank reserve has run low, with the increase in the price of basic necessities and prime commodities. The drought has made it even worse, with our crops being affected. However, all these did not make our community lose hope. We continued to work with even greater vigor and determination. Yes, this year has been full of challenges, but we continue to trust in Divine Providence and in the generosity of the people.

Our community has to be resilient amidst all these challenges to also give hope to the people we serve. The way our community handled the crisis has strengthened the people's resolve to keep moving forward.

Keeping Faith and Hope

Christ's love impels us to keep our faith and hope and to continue to serve the Indonesian people. We put our trust in the Lord, and we pray that many generous people will come forward to help and support our missionary work here in Indonesia and in other parts of the world.